

General Rodgers happy to be back

By Dewey Mitchell

Wilford Hall Medical Center Public Affairs

"I'm excited to be here – this IS the business, the fun place to be, because we're doing so much for Air Force healthcare, for readiness and our senior patriots," said Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Lee P. Rodgers, who became 59th Medical Wing commander Monday.

In the command change in front of Wilford Hall Medical Center, Rodgers received the wing's flag from Gen. Hal M. Hornburg, commander of Air Education and Training Command, after the flag was relinquished by Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Earl W. Mabry II, who is retiring after 27 years of service.

Following the ceremony, the Rodgers family was welcomed in a reception in the atrium. Rodgers and his wife, Mariel, have three children: Luke, Katherine and Kelsey.

The new commander spoke from his home in San Antonio during a recent interview prior to the change of command. He had formerly served as vice commander at Wilford Hall, departing in 1995. He was asked what key messages he would like to communicate to members of the wing.

"We're going to have some real challenging times, but that's no reason to be upset or depressed, because we're going to approach problems in different ways than we did in the past," he said. "Sometimes change is scary but not bad – sometimes doing things in new and different ways can work better than before."

Asked about the numerous challenges, threats and multiple missions, Rodgers replied, "I want us to survive – better and stronger. We've got fiscal

problems, but we can be better by redefining our most important missions. One thing we must be clear on is which issues we HAVE to do. It's clear that we need to be engaged."

Rodgers said one of the important parts of leadership is effective communication. "Working within large organizations, an individual may just see a small part of the picture, but it's important that everyone sees where the whole organization is going. It's also important to remember that the only reason we are in uniform is so that we can do what the country needs us to do.

"First and foremost, we're each a member of the Air Force, not just a lab tech, nurse, doctor, etc. Also, the organization should support families."

He emphasized that his impact as commander is limited. "One person as leader can't make the organization. It's the sum total of all the talents – everybody on the team must play and give their best to the organization."

What partnerships will he work on building or improving? "Obviously, I need to get to know the players in San Antonio, our contract partners and other key leaders and see how we can work together better."

Rodgers also made it clear to group commanders in his first meeting with them Tuesday that he will be out and about within the organization. As he begins visits to each of the organizations, he will receive briefings and then get walking tours to get quickly familiar with each area.

"We're looking forward to all the challenges and new relationships that lie ahead, but right now Mariel and I are just happy to be back in our home in San Antonio."



Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Wynn Mabry (center) passes the 59th Medical Wing guidon to Gen. Hal M. Hornburg (left), Air Education and Training Command commander. Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Lee P. Rodgers (right) took command of the 59th Medical Wing in a ceremony at Wilford Hall Medical Center Monday. Rodgers replaces Mabry, who retired July 21.

The Rodgers File

EDUCATION

1972 — Bachelor of science degree in life sciences, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

1976 — Doctorate of medicine, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.

1986 — School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas

1990 — Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS

June 1979 - May 1981 -- Chief of pediatrics, U.S. Air Force Hospital, Misawa Air Base, Japan
June 1981 - June 1984 -- Chief of hospital services, U.S. Air Force Hospital, Royal Air Force Upper Heyford, England

July 1984 - December 1986 -- Chief of hospital services, U.S. Air Force Hospital, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

January 1987 - July 1989 -- Commander, 42nd Strategic Hospital, Loring Air Force Base, Maine
August 1989 - July 1990 -- Student, Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

August 1990 - August 1992 -- Commander, 374th Medical Group, Yokota Air Base, Japan
August 1992 - August 1994 -- Chief of clinical medicine, director of professional services and deputy to the command surgeon, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

September 1994 - August 1995 -- Vice commander, 59th Medical Wing, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

August 1995 - November 1997 -- Command surgeon, Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

November 1997 - March 1999 -- Commander, 60th Medical Group, David Grant Medical Center and lead agent, Department of Defense Health Service Region 10, Travis Air Force Base, Calif.
March 1999 - July 2000 -- Command surgeon general, U.S. Transportation Command and Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating -- Senior flight surgeon and master parachutist (more than 600 jumps).

Aircraft flown -- B-52, C-21, C-130 and KC-135.

Flight surgeon wings -- 1986, School of Aerospace Medicine.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal

Legion of Merit

Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Diplomat, American College of Healthcare Executives

Board certified pediatrician

American College of Physicians Executives

EFFECTIVE DATES OF

PROMOTION

Captain — June 5, 1976

Major — Jan. 5, 1981

Lieutenant Colonel — Sept. 30, 1986

Colonel — Jan. 31, 1991

Brigadier General — Sept. 1, 1998

Major General — March 31, 2000